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SOME POEMS OF JEHUDA HALEVI.

I.

BACK, my soul, into thy nest;
Earth is not for thee;
Still in heaven find thy rest;
There thou canst be free.

Strive not for this world's command,
Look to what thou hast.
Thou amidst the angels' band
Shar'st the great repast.

Demean thee 'fore the majesty
Of him who reigneth there,
And in a lordly company
Be thou the courtier.

II.

Beauty, and exaltation, crowning joy,—
Such as beseem a kingly residence,—
How these attract my soul, so timorous, coy,
'Mid graceless ease of Western dalliance!

My bosom's very deepest chords vibrate
When I look back, and think of days of old,
Of majesty, now fallen to low estate,
And fount of living warmth, now barren, cold.

Till, soaring upwards, in my fancy's dream
On eagle's pinions Eastward swift I fly,
And there my welling tears that earthwards stream
With Zion's dust commingling sanctify.

Thou'rt still my goal, though he for whom I long
Waits not for me in thee; and for my woes,
Thou offerest no soothing balm, but throng
Of stinging trials, serpent brood of foes.

Yet should I be unto thy stones outcast,
Even them with friendship's gladsome kiss I'll greet;
And must I with my lips thy clods hold fast,
My taste shall make them more than honey sweet.

III.

God's still with me when I go out
Whether with courage or with doubt.
My mind is still on God intent
And to his constant goodness bent.
And God will keep me glad at heart
When with my earthly goods I part,
And greater fortune to me bring
As all my gains from me I fling:
And in this timber's swelling mass
Cause me through oceans safe to pass,
And make its motion wings for me
Like storks that fly across the sea:
And give me power to hear the deep
Moan music in his troubled sleep,
The perfect image of my soul
Reflecting in his mighty whole.
And in his rage discern the fire
That seethes the cauldron of the mire,
And makes the sea an emblem fit
Of hell's confusion, and the pit:
Secure amid an Aryan crew
That to strange seas their course pursue
Where rude barbarian pirate war
Emerges from a hidden shore:
Nor daunted by the fishy breed
That mock our vessel's puny speed
Nor by sea-monsters' hideous glare,
That watch us for a dainty fare.
Courageous still when mastering pains
Shall loose the framework of my reins,
And prospect of relief delude
With feeble strain that brings no good.
I see before me sore distress
With ne'er a crust my soul to bless:
But sweet upon my tongue the while
God's name my hunger shall beguile.

I shall not have one anxious thought
When all my labour falls to nought,
And poverty becomes my lot
And grim misfortune leaves me not.
Yea, should that greatest loss befall
Which touches me most near of all,
Of her to whom my soul is tied,
Sole offspring of a father's pride:
Serene in mind, should loss proceed
One further step my heart to bleed,
And rob me of my house's stay,
Sole theme of all my fancy's play.
The dear descendant of my flesh,
Whose play still keeps my feeling fresh,
I can forget him, though he be
In name and nature one with me.
For this and every blow of fate
Thy saving love will compensate,
And find a better home for me
In joyful service unto thee;
And make me of thy chosen band
Attentive, quick to thy command.
Even shouldst thou call for sacrifice
Of life-blood as thy favour's price.
Content to sink into the grave
If in thy land a part I have;
For then in truth this would be mine,
A witness sure that I am thine.

M. SIMON.